United Nations A/60/7/Add.36

General Assembly

Distr.: General
9 March 2006

Original: English

Sixtieth session
Agenda items 46, 120 and 124

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007

2005 World Summit Outcome: Peacebuilding Support Office

Revised estimates to the programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007

Thirty-seventh report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the report of the Secretary-General on revised estimates to the programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007 relating to the establishment of the Peacebuilding Support Office (A/60/694).

2. The General Assembly, in its resolution 60/1, requested the Secretary-General to establish, within the Secretariat and from within existing resources, a small peacebuilding support office staffed by qualified experts to assist and support the Peacebuilding Commission. In its resolution 60/180, the Assembly reaffirmed that request (see also Security Council resolution 1645 (2005), para. 23). The Assembly also recognized that such support could include gathering and analysing information relating to the availability of financial resources, relevant United Nations in-country planning activities, progress towards meeting short and medium-term recovery goals and best practices with respect to cross-cutting peacebuilding issues. As stated in paragraphs 18 and 19 of the report of the Secretary-General:

> "It is not envisaged that the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Support Office will possess direct operational capacity ... Capacities for operational peacebuilding activities will remain in other parts of the United Nations system."

06-26593 (E) 100306

3. The report of the Secretary-General was submitted pursuant to a decision taken by the General Assembly in conjunction with the adoption of resolution 60/180 (see A/60/598, para. 5), by which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report back to it in response to the recommendation made by the Advisory Committee in its report of 16 December 2005 (A/60/7/Add.25) that the Secretary-General revisit the matter and submit a proposal that would be consistent with the intent of the Assembly. In its report, the Committee pointed out that it is incumbent upon the Secretary-General to fully justify the need for additional resources and to provide a full analysis of the possibilities for absorption and redeployment.

4. In his report, the Secretary-General estimates that a staffing complement of 15 posts would be required for the Peacebuilding Support Office, on the assumption that the Peacebuilding Commission will examine two to three active country situations in its first year of operation (see A/60/694, para. 24). This staffing estimate represents a reduction from the original proposal for 21 staff. A comparative breakdown of the original proposal and the current proposed staffing is set out in the table below.

Proposed staffing of the Peacebuilding Support Office

Original proposal (A/C.5/60/22)	Current proposal (A/60/694)
1 Assistant Secretary-General	1 Assistant Secretary-General
1 D-2	1 D-2
1 D-1	2 D-1[b]
3 P-5	4 P-5[a,b]
5 P-4	2 P-4[a,b]
5 P-3	2 P-3[a]
1 GS (Principal level)	1 GS (Principal level)
4 GS (Other level)	2 GS (Other level)

[a] Two P-5, one P-4 and two P-3 posts would be redeployed to the Office under the terms of General Assembly resolution 60/246.

[b] One D-1, one P-5 and one P-4 post would be lent by United Nations system organizations on a non-reimbursable basis.

While paragraph 28 and annexes I and II of the report of the Secretary-General provide an outline of the structure and functions of the Office, the Advisory Committee notes, as it has in previous reports (see A/60/7/Add.13 and Corr.1 and 2, para. 35, and A/60/7/Add.25, para. 5) that no detailed descriptions of the functions of the requested posts have been given.

5. The total requirements for the Peacebuilding Support Office for the biennium 2006-2007 are estimated at $5,595,400. Of this amount, $1,604,200, corresponding to five posts, would be met through redeployment under the post movement flexibility provided for in General Assembly resolution 60/246, and $1,185,800, corresponding to three posts, is expected to be provided on a non-reimbursable basis

by other United Nations system organizations. The Secretary-General proposes that the remaining post and non-post requirements amounting to $2,805,400 (7 posts at an estimated cost of $1,259,400 and non-post costs estimated at $1,546,000) be accommodated within the overall resources approved for 2006-2007 through the utilization of the provision for special political missions appropriated under section 3, Political affairs, of the programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007.

6. The Secretary-General's proposal does comply with the General Assembly's request that the cost associated with the establishment of the Office be accommodated from within existing resources in the sense that a balance of $52.6 million would remain available from within the appropriation of $336 million for special political missions if current proposals before the General Assembly were to be approved. **The Committee points out, however, that no financial provision has thus far been made for the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan beyond March 2006 or for special political missions for 2007. Future requirements for special political missions, especially those relating to 2007, will clearly exceed the original appropriation, should there be no significant changes that would streamline existing activities and foster synergies.**

7. **Moreover, the Advisory Committee points out that a charge to the provision for special political missions for the Peacebuilding Support Office would represent an expansion of its use. That provision was intended to be used for activities of limited duration that may be replaced by other activities during a biennium. Although there may have been departures from this principle, in the opinion of the Committee it is important, wherever possible, to maintain it.**

8. **A practical problem thus exists in terms of how to speedily implement the decision of the Assembly with regard to the establishment of the Peacebuilding Support Office while pursuing budget transparency and respecting the intent of the Assembly to accommodate requirements within existing resources. Under the circumstances, the Committee would interpose no objection, for the time being, to charging the provision for special political missions for the cost of up to seven positions at the grade levels proposed as a provisional and exceptional measure, and on the understanding that efforts to provide staff through secondment or redeployment would continue. The Committee is of the opinion that the staffing needs of the Office, including grade levels, should be reviewed within one year after the Commission starts its work. The results of the review, including additional efforts to meet staffing requirements through secondment and redeployment, should be submitted as a separate analysis during the consideration of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009. At that time, the Secretary-General should also propose a funding arrangement that will promote budgetary transparency.**

9. As noted in paragraphs 29 and 30 of the report of the Secretary-General, estimated non-post requirements of $792,200 under section 3 of the programme budget would provide for general temporary assistance ($158,800) and overtime ($54,200), consultants ($228,000) travel ($252,300), general operating expenses ($73,200), supplies and materials ($2,100) and office automation equipment ($23,600). Under section 28D, non-post requirements estimated at $753,800 would provide for rental of premises ($430,500), alteration of office space ($242,600) and furniture and equipment ($80,700).

10. With regard to requirements under section 28D, Office of Central Support Services, of the programme budget, the Advisory Committee was informed that the intention was to charge the amount of $753,800 against the provision for special political missions under section 3 of the programme budget, thus transferring resources from section 3 to section 28D. **The Committee recognizes that a certain quantum of resources will be necessary for the costs associated with establishing posts and positions, such as office space and equipment; however, transferring resources at this stage will only increase the likely need for a future additional appropriation under section 3 (see para. 6 above). These requirements should therefore be accommodated from within the provision for section 28D and reported in the context of the performance report. In this connection, the Committee trusts that due attention will be paid to the need to physically place the Office in a location that will facilitate its interactive functions with other offices, as well as minimize additional rental costs.**

11. In paragraph 29 of the report of the Secretary-General, an amount of $228,000 is requested for the services of consultants required for in-depth studies of peacebuilding experience in particular countries or in relation to major thematic issues, or of financing mechanisms for early recovery and transition. The Advisory Committee notes the statement in paragraph 19 of the report that the Peacebuilding Support Office will count on and complement the capacities of existing actors, including Secretariat offices and departments, specialized agencies and United Nations funds and programmes, and further that the value added by the Office will be in the form of facilitating coherence, identifying gaps, recommending ways in which these gaps may be addressed and ensuring that the Peacebuilding Commission is able to draw as necessary, in a timely and efficient manner, on the expertise and capacities of the United Nations system as a whole, as well as those of outside expert networks, regional organizations and other institutions. Under the terms of resolution 60/180, the Office is to be staffed by qualified experts to assist and support the Peacebuilding Commission. Therefore, as the Committee understands it, the Peacebuilding Support Office is to be staffed by qualified experts whose function is to coordinate expertise throughout the system. Since it is not yet known which country situations the Peacebuilding Commission may be addressing during the biennium (and therefore what, if any, knowledge gaps there may be), the request for consultants amounts to a contingency provision. **The Committee recommends that the use of in-house capacity be maximized and that such requirements for consultants as may materialize be requested and fully justified in the one-year review discussed in paragraph 8 above or reported in the performance report.**

12. The estimated requirement for official travel ($252,300) also amounts to conjecture, since it is not yet known which country situations the Commission will address. Further, it is the view of the Advisory Committee that the central coordinating role envisaged for the Peacebuilding Support Office would not entail the need for a great deal of travel on the part of staff. The Committee therefore recommends that maximum use be made of other forms of communication, such as videoconferencing, and encourages the Secretariat to exercise flexibility and creativity in providing for any travel requirements from within existing resources. **Should an additional appropriation be required, it should be requested and fully justified in the context of the one-year review requested in paragraph 8 above or reported in the performance report.**

13. The action requested of the General Assembly is set out in paragraph 33 of the report of the Secretary-General. **Taking into account its recommendations in paragraphs 8 and 10 to 12 above, the Advisory Committee recommends that the Assembly note that 5 of the 15 posts requested for the Peacebuilding Support Office would be accommodated through redeployment and that a further 3 posts would be provided through non-reimbursable secondment by other United Nations system organizations. The Committee further recommends that the proposed charge against the provision for special political missions of $2,805,400 under section 3 of the programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007 be reduced by $1,234,100. The total charge against the provision for special political missions corresponding to costs associated with the establishment of the Peacebuilding Support Office would thus amount to $1,571,300.**